}: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

ooo alistically estimated at about one person to six and a half square miles, and for the best watered sections as about three persons to every ten square miles.[5] Some detailed corroboration for this last figure is supplied by the Tiwi of Melville and Bathurst Islands who are dealt with at length in this monograph. The Tiwi are one of the few tribes occupying a well-watered and favorable environment for hunting and gathering who have been left in continuous occupation of their native habitat down to the present day. A careful and exhaustive census of them (by Hart) in 1928-29 showed that the approximately 2900 square miles comprising the two islands were occupied and used by 1062 people.

[161] 162

Thus between the time of their first arrival and approximately 1770 when the white men first got to know them, the original group of primitive castaways had multiplied to a population of between 250,000 and 275,000. This relatively small number (for the size of the continent) was thinly spread over most of the land, but was more numerous in the areas where the water supply was good and where the natives had available adequate sources of meat—marsupial, reptile, and bird—and fish, as well as a considerable quantity of wild plant foods.

Basically, all Australian tribes had cultures of the same general type, although local variation had developed as the original emigrants spread out into different geographical environments and their descendants lost contact with each other. The question of how many tribes there were at the beginning of white settlement is almost impossible to answer since "tribe" in Australia meant little more than a group of bands with a distinct language. There were at least five hundred distinct languages (all belonging to the same linguistic family, but most of them mutually unintelligible) which in the total population of a quarter of a million gives an average of about five hundred speakers for each distinct linguistic group. This seems a low figure for a so-called tribe and is probably brought about by the large number of very small linguistic units ("tribes") which early writers report in some areas such as coastal New South Wales and parts of Victoria. Certainly the linguistic units ("tribes") which survived down to modern times and could therefore be studied by twentieth-century anthropologists, such as the Aruntа, Murngin, and Tiwi tribes, were considerably larger than five hundred people, but probably even the biggest "tribes" did not exceed two thousand in population.

Scattered in small local groups (bands) over enormous areas of country and armed only with boomerangs, crude stone-pointed spears, and spear throwers, the Australian natives were in no position to resist the white settlers. They were simply brushed aside by the early British colonists[6] who began arriving in 1788, and in the course of the next century and a half, the natives

[5] Radcliffe-Brown 1930.

[6] There is an interesting link between American history and the first white settlement in Australia. Prior to the Revolutionary War, Great Britain deported her worst criminals to convict settlements in the colony of Georgia. After American independence, she had to find a new dumping ground to relieve the overcrowding in the British jails and established her new convict settlement at Botany Bay near the present city of Sydney on the east coast of Australia.

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

to the husband of the pregnant woman. We carefully say "the husband of the pregnant woman" rather than "the father of the child" because the right resided in the male head of the household at the time of the birth. Although he was ordinarily both the father of the child and the husband of its mother, there were naturally occasions when a child was born after the death of its father, in which case the right of betrothal unquestionably belonged to the mother's new husband. The clearest statement of this rule is to say that the right of betrothal of all newly born females resided in the husband of the mother at the time of the girl's birth. "He who named the child bestowed it."

In most human societies the proportion of males and females in the population is approximately equal, except in the older age-groups where women predominate owing to their tendency to live longer than men. The Tiwi conformed to this norm biologically, but their cultural insistence that all females of every age be married resulted in further unusual features of the domestic situation. No such compulsory marriage was required or expected of males. Hence, the total female population, but only part of the male population, was married. Mathematically this permitted, indeed required, a high degree of plural marriage. The men who held the right to betroth—namely, the fathers of the female babies—could, within certain limits imposed by the kinship system, bestow their about-to-be-born or newly born daughters where they wished, and they certainly did not bestow them on about-to-be-born or newly born males. On the contrary, they bestowed them, generally speaking, where some tangible return was to be anticipated. Put bluntly, in Tiwi culture daughters were an asset to their father, and he invested these assets in his own welfare. He therefore bestowed his newly born daughter on a friend or an ally, or on somebody he wanted as a friend or an ally. Such a person was apt to be a man near his own age or at least an adult man, and hence perhaps forty years or so older than the newly born baby bestowed upon him as a wife. Or, the father might bestow an infant daughter on a man—or some close relative of such a man—who had already bestowed an infant daughter upon him, thus in effect swapping infant daughters. Obviously, the fathers who did the swapping, even if they were not quite the same age themselves, were bound to be many years older than the infant wives they thus received from each other. Or, thirdly, a father looking for a suitable male upon whom to bestow his infant daughter's hand might decide to use her as old-age insurance—in which case he selected as her future husband not one of the older adult men who would be old when he himself was old, but a likely looking youngster "with promise"; that is, a youth in his late twenties or thirties who showed signs of being a good hunter and a good fighting man, and who was clearly on his way up in tribal power and influence. Such a youth, in his late twenties at the time of betrothal, would, with luck, be in his prime as "a big man" in about twenty years—a time when the father of the infant daughter would be getting old and decrepit and much in need of an influential son-in-law who was obligated to him.

There were other bases upon which infant daughters were betrothed,

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

The Beginning of Tiwi Careers

The Malauila in 1928-29 consisted of forty-nine males and sixty females of all ages. The males were divided into the following age groups:

20 years and below	28
between 21 and 30	7
between 31 and 42	7
between 43 and 55	4
over 55	3
Total	49

Of the twenty-eight males aged 20 or below, none had a wife of any kind, and none of them expected or were expected to have one. This group comprised the male children—boys and youths—and such males were of no importance whatever in the Tiwi scheme of things. They lived in the households of older men and were ignored by the male elders.

The next group, the seven men between 21 and 30, was the group of young men whom the elders were just beginning to take seriously. The younger of them were almost indistinguishable from the "youths," while the older of them were beginning to be watched by the seniors with some interest. Of the seven, six were neither married to a wife of any sort nor promised a wife. One, called Banana by the whites, was a man of about 28 and married to an ancient crone who was childless by three previous husbands, but she was in the category of "disputed" wife since her young husband had only been able to acquire and hold her because of abnormal circumstances arising from the presence of white buffalo-hunters on Melville Island some years previously. Under pre-white conditions, none of the seven men under 30 would have had a wife of any kind.

The years between 30 and 40 were the crucial years for Tiwi men in their establishment of households and careers. It was during this period that men normally married their first ancient widows and the "likely to be successful" became sorted out from the less-likely. As they passed into their thirties, men were allowed to enter for the first time into the influence game and, as the most junior players, they entered it by becoming subordinates and satellites of the bigger and more senior players, or by making alliances among themselves so as to pool their small individual assets.

In this age group in 1928-29, there were seven Malauila men ranging in age from around 31 to 42. One (Tiberun) was still unmarried and unpromised. He was thus (at age about 33) the oldest bachelor in the band. Not unnaturally he spent a good deal of time with other bands or at the Mission in the hope that his failure to get started in Malau might be remedied by elders of other bands or even by the priests. Tiberun was an older full brother of Banana, the 28-year-old married irregularly to a woman whom he had "stolen." A glance at their family tree revealed one potent reason why Tiberun

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

TABLE II
KI-IN-KUMI'S ESTABLISHMENT

(Ages in brackets)

	Males	Females
Head (Ki-in-kumi 66)	1	0
Oldest step-son (Boya 42)	1	0
Sister's son (Padimo 36)	1	0
Old wives (of all three adult men)	0	5
Young wives (including Padimo's 2)	0	11
Young males (sons and step-sons)	8	0
Young females (daughters and step-daughters)	0	5
Totals	11	21

Confronted by this situation, Ki-in-kumi in his advancing years had summoned Padimo, a sister's son in his early thirties, to come from Raugu and become his chief lieutenant. The youth of his own son had been a factor in his selection of Padimo. The presence in his camp of an older step-son, Boya, had been another factor. Boya, the step-son, was more than twenty years older than the son, and at least six years older than Padimo, the chosen instrument. Padimo, as we have seen, moved right in, fused his own small household with Ki-in-kumi's large one, and became Ki-in-kumi's Man Friday. Boya, the step-son, though married to a widow, refused to move out. Thus, among other things, we have to distinguish between Ki-in-kumi's household of twelve resident wives enumerated above, and Ki-in-kumi's establishment which contained Padimo, Boya, and the various people attached by marriage or kinship to them. Padimo had an old wife and two young wives (daughters of Ki-in-kumi). Boya had an old wife and a younger brother. There were a number of younger step-children of both sexes also resident with Ki-in-kumi. The full size and make-up of his establishment is given in Table II.

The Establishments of Malau

There were, besides Ki-in-kumi, six other elders of the Malauila band. Two of these, the brothers Enquirio and Merapanui, were well over sixty and deserve, both by age and by success, to be labeled senior elders. The remaining four ranged in age from about 45 to nearly 60 and since none of them were particularly successful we call them the junior elders. In Table III we have listed the seven "establishments" in which lived all the members of the band. We mean by an establishment a food-production and food-consumption unit. Ki-in-kumi's establishment contained three married men—himself, Boya, and Padimo—and therefore contained three households. Economically it was one establishment, since the sixteen wives it contained worked

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

as a team and the food they produced was consumed by the thirty-two total members of the establishment. For comparative purposes in Table III we list Ki-in-kumi's establishment as Unit I and give the personnel breakdown of the other six establishments that made up the total population of Malau. Unit II is the joint enterprise maintained by the other two senior elders, the brothers Enquirio and Merapanui. To this we have added the pathetic and ostracized Teapot and his motherless son, since when they ate at all they ate as hangers-on of the Enquirio-Merapanui menage. Unit III is the establishment jointly maintained by the brothers White Man and Ku-nai-u-ua. Since the oldest wife of Ku-nai-u-ua was Summit's mother, that young man, together with the elderly ex-widow who was so far his only resident wife, lived in this establishment. Units IV and V present no difficulty; they are the small households of the other two junior elders Pingirimini and Tipiperna-gerai respectively. Unit VI is the joint enterprise of Gitjara and L. F. B., containing largely old ladies and young men. Unit VII is the remarkable menage that had gathered round the elderly widow whom young Banana had illegally "married." To this couple

TABLE III

THE FOOD PRODUCTION UNITS OF MALAU

Unit	Married Males	Unmarried Males[a]	Old Wives[b]	Young Wives	Girls Under 14	Total Persons
I	3	8	5	11	5	32
II	3	9	1	7	11	31
III	3	2	2	3	5	15
IV	1	5	0	1	1	8
V	1	2	0	1	2	6
VI	2	5	3	0	1	11
VII	1[?]	4	1	0	0	6
Total	14	35	12	23	25	109

[a] Unmarried males include all males from male infants to men around 30, or more.
[b] The division between old wives and young wives is arbitrary. Several of the young wives were 40, others only 14 or 15.
[?] The question mark in Unit VII refers to the difficulty of deciding whether Banana should be classified as married.

had attached themselves Tiberun (Banana's unmarried older brother), two younger brothers, and another male orphan who had apparently moved in for want of some better place to eat. The Banana menage thus had somewhat the appearance of a case of economic polyandry and somewhat the look of a fraternity house with an elderly housemother in residence. We include it as Unit VII since by so doing we are able to include in Table III all the hundred and nine people who made up the Malauila band in 1928-29 and allocate all of them to the economic units in which they functioned as food producers and food consumers.

The data in Table III merit close study. These seven establishments illustrate in capsule form several of the more significant emphases in Tiwi career patterns; indeed each might be said to illustrate some time point in the life careers of adult men and/or some degree of success or lack of success in becoming an influential man.

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

The Politics of Widow Remarriage

Ki-in-kumi's large establishment was the sort of set-up that every Tiwi sought to achieve but few accomplished. An establishment such as his meant wealth, power, prestige, and influence for its head, and, in Malau, Ki-in-kumi was the only man with such a household. With eleven males, many of them food producing; sixteen women, all of them food producing; and several of the girls under fourteen able to assist the older women, the amount of food this unit could collect in a day provided an ample food surplus for the establishment. A man whose household was a surplus food producer was a successful man. Moreover, since the large work force that produced the food surplus contained numerous young wives who (usually) could be relied upon also to produce numerous female babies, he was doubly blessed with both the requisites—surplus food and surplus daughters—necessary to increase his influence and make more people beholden to him or dependent on him. Of the thirty-five married women in Malau, sixteen, or over 45 percent, were in this one establishment.

By comparison, the other old men of Malau were less successful.[8] Through pooling their work forces, Enquirio and Merapanui had achieved an establishment (Unit II) almost as big as that of Ki-in-kumi, and probably its members ate almost as well as the members of his, but their effort was a shared effort and their influence and prestige had to be divided between them. They had been lucky with daughters but, divided between the two fathers, the eleven daughters in their establishment were less impressive than Ki-in-kumi's eight, and the total of seven young wives between them was quite overshadowed by Ki-in-kumi's nine. The two old brothers were successful men and headed a successful operation, but their prestige and success must be rated at least one whole degree below that of Ki-in-kumi.

Another pair of elderly brothers, White Man and Ku-nai-u-ua, had also joined forces (Unit III), but the results can be judged as only fair. They were at least the best off of their age group, the 45- to 55-year-olds, but the competition in that age group was weak, as can be seen by comparison of their establishment with Units IV and V, the households of Pingirimini and Tipiperna-gerai. Perhaps the best indication of the respective success in life of the seven oldest men is that given in the column of Table III headed "young wives." Of the twenty-three such women in the band, eighteen were in the establishments[9] of the three oldest men (Units I and II); the next five men in age shared the remaining five (Units III, IV, and V).

It might be thought that the small establishments of the unsuccessful junior elders like White Man, Ku-nai-u-ua, Pingirimini, and Tipiperna-gerai could be expected to increase sharply in size and these men to grow in relative prestige and influence when death removed the three old men at the heads

[8] It will be noticed that as we move into the older group of men we have to use their native names, since most of them had no "whiteman" names.

[9] Two of these eighteen were of course actually married to Padimo, but still part of the establishment of their father, Ki-in-kumi, since Padimo's wives all lived with Ki-in-kumi's wives.

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

months after the attack on Darwin. Many of the older Tiwi who were in Darwin during the bombing did not survive the war; the psychological strain and lack of sufficient food was too much for them. Genealogies show that an unusual number of deaths occurred among Tiwi between 1942 and 1946.

When Western food supplies again became available, the old Tiwi bush living seems to have departed. The Tiwi suddenly realized their full dependence upon the products which only the whites could provide. As the war came to an end and one after another of the temporary military bases were abandoned, the missionaries and the Tiwi salvaged what they could, transporting large amounts of corrugated iron to Bathurst Island Mission for native huts. The Tiwi were drawn together around the Mission in larger numbers than ever before, their camps ranging in a line along the Mission beach. The majority of the Tiwi, about 600, considered Bathurst Island Mission their home, although some of the young adult males spent most of the year in Darwin. About 30 islanders lived adjacent to the half-caste Melville Island Mission at Garden Point. Another 130 were permanently located at the government settlement at Snake Bay. The remaining Tiwi, about 130, were year-round residents of Darwin; over one hundred lived at Bagot Native Compound and at an unsupervised native camp at Point Gunn directly opposite the southernmost tip of Melville Island; the rest were inmates at the leper colony. The resulting total population of about 930, in 1954, is only about a hundred less than the figure of 1062 which Hart obtained in his census of 1928-29.

Marriage Arrangements

We have discussed how, under the traditional Tiwi pattern of life, the greatest energies of mature males were expended in bargaining with each other for new wives. The old social system was one which had as normal features prenatal and early childhood engagements for females, remarriage for all widows, considerable age difference between marriage partners, and polygamy. The new Catholic system introduced by Father Gsell outlawed, or at least discouraged, polygamous marriages, nuptial unions between persons of greatly differing ages, and all prenatal or childhood betrothals. As indicated, Father Gsell initiated his new policies by purchasing young females and then allowing them to choose their own partners from among their single agemates.

It is of interest to inspect the actual circumstances surrounding one of the earliest unions which took place under Father Gsell's supervision. About 1914, Polly, an attractive young female who had already had a rather checkered career, having been stolen by a Yuwatja male from her rightful mate, was "stolen back" by another Tiwi, Timalarua of the Rangwila. Polly, however, decided that she did not want an old husband like Timalarua, so she ran away to the sisters and Father Gsell. In time, old Timalarua allowed Father Gsell to buy this wife who did not want to live with him. Shortly afterward, Father Gsell asked Polly whom she wanted to marry. Polly named Cabbagee as the

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

177 S92 them impressive collections of females. But these collections included now only one wife.

Let us consider again the case of Cabbagee. It will be remembered that 159 his had been one of Father Gsell's first marriages and, except for a few un- 177 comfortable months, he had been monogamous all his life. There were camped 592 with him in 1954 a number of women and children who were related to him in many ways. There was his wife Polly, now a good Catholic who had taken the Christian name of Carmel, and her ancient mother Rita, who had borne a child long before the white man came to Bathurst Island. Also in "Cabbagee's camp," as the natives referred to it, was Patrick, Cabbagee's only son, and Patrick's wife. Patrick and his wife had three surviving children between the ages of four and thirteen; they also were raising 14-year-old Fabian, whose [736 deceased father had been a "brother" of Patrick and whose deceased mother 968] had been a "sister" of Patrick's wife. Cabbagee and Carmel (alias Polly) had three daughters, and Cabaggee had arranged with each son-in-law that he reside with Cabbagee and support him in his fights and politics. These daughters and sons-in-law had a total of ten children. The other members of Cabbagee's camp included the widow and children of Carmel's deceased [584 younger maternal half-brother. Cabbagee had given this "sister" to Car- 589] mel's half-brother for his wife and when he died seven years later leaving a number of young children, Cabbagee defended the right of his "sister" not to remarry. With this "sister" of Cabbagee lived her step-mother and occasionally her real mother, until the latter died. Further, living in Cabbagee's camp were [607] two of his full sister's daughters and their husbands, who became members of the camp by reason of the fact that Cabbagee arranged his sister's marriage in such a way that her husband, Babui, accepted Cabbagee as his leader.[1] When Babui arranged his own daughters' marriages, his new sons-in-law [602] became subservient to Babui and thereby subservient to Cabbagee. Also resident in Cabbagee's camp at times were his younger paternal half-brother Pawpaw with his two surviving wives, his full brother Tommy's son, and two of their widowed "sisters" and their children.

177 We have mentioned here only that segment of Cabbagee's camp led 162 by Cabbagee himself and that led by his half-brother Pawpaw, but such a list- 571 ing is adequate for our purposes. It is noteworthy that the downward alteration in the age of marriage for males has meant that many less women become widows; first marriages of women last longer and, therefore, the system of [764 patronage established at the time of the first marriage is more permanent. Babui's marriage, for example, had made him a henchman of Cabbagee from about 1920 to 1955. When women did become widows, especially if they had 604 daughters, they were protected by their brothers who thereby became the 584 "boss" of their daughters. The father or the "boss" of a girl arranged her mar- 177

[1] Hart would use the word "patron" in this relationship. Pilling prefers the word "leader." This is itself an indication of a certain subtle change in Tiwi social structure. The patron-satellite relationship of 1928-29 is nowadays better expressed as leader-follower. The pairs of men are closer in age than they used to be. How the Tiwi themselves now express the relationship is indicated in the next footnote.

3: Hart E-5 (1928-1929) 1930 OI20 Tiwi OI20

713 vicinity of this rock, so the legend runs, and they are often called the *Wurukwompila*.

The *Timiriringui* are said to have come originally from a small island off the coast of *Wrayga* where the *timiriringa* (woolly-butt tree) is especially prolific due to the fact that it was here that *Prondupu*, the original mythological woolly-butt, settled after the battle at *Tayio* between the animal-men.

So the story goes on throughout the list of totems. It is not a myth properly so called since mythological figures are in it only incidentally. As told by the Tiwi it is a rationalized explanation on a basis of local geography and the desires of old men generations ago.

162 614 The clans vary greatly in size. The largest clan, *Mierdui*, numbers 132 persons whereas the *Paroliungibila* has only six and the *Taparui* only two. The distribution of the population amongst the clans and the hordes will be dealt with in a later paper in which the results of a census of the Tiwi population will be given.

C. W. M. HART